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Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies

Report of the Secretary-General*

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* The submission of the present report was delayed to allow more time for replies from Member States.

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I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to General Assembly resolution 54/36 of 29 November 1999, entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies".

2. In the above-mentioned resolution, the General Assembly, having considered the report of the Secretary-General (A/54/492), expressed its appreciation for the activities carried out by the United Nations system, and endorsed the recommendations contained in the report.

3. In paragraph 34, recommendation 2, of the report, it was proposed that, besides the yearly debate in the General Assembly on the item concerning support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote and consolidate new or restored democracies, Member States might wish to give their comments and observations on the review and suggestions contained in the report (in particular in sects. IV and V) and, more importantly, on their own experiences and "lessons learned" as new, restored or established democracies and/or as donors supporting democratic institutions with projects in other countries or regions. Those comments and observations would then be assembled and presented for further action to the Assembly and the Fourth International Conference of New or Restored Democracies scheduled to take place in Cotonou, Benin, from 4 to 6 December 2000.

4. In accordance with recommendation 2 of the report, the Secretary-General, in a note verbale dated 14 March 2000 and a further note verbale dated 3 July 2000, invited Member States to communicate their views to him on the subject matter.

5. As at 3 October, the following replies had been received.

II. Replies received from Governments

Cuba

[Original: Spanish]
[3 July 2000]

The Government of the Republic of Cuba attaches particular importance to the promotion and consolidation of democracies throughout the world and, accordingly, has followed with great interest the efforts being made to that end within the framework of the United Nations system.

Although the international community can welcome significant advances such as the end of apartheid in South Africa and the dismantling of colonialism in many countries which have joined the community of free nations, much remains to be done, and even greater hazards and more distinct trends have arisen in recent years as a result of the interest and desire of a small group of rich and powerful countries to impose its views and its supposedly democratic models.

In Cuba's view, the power of the people is the very essence of democracy. The concept of democracy is multidimensional, encompassing the exercise of power and decision-making in both the political and the economic, social and cultural spheres.

Democracy has followed many models and has been institutionalized in many forms throughout history and in various civilizations and cultures, from ancient Greece to the present. The richness of the world's community of democracies lies precisely in its diversity.

The international community must therefore stand ready to combat the following adverse trends that can be observed in the work of some intergovernmental organs of the United Nations system, from the Commission on Human Rights to the General Assembly itself:

1. The manipulation of international cooperation for the promotion and consolidation of democracies to serve the interest of a small group of rich and powerful countries in world domination, in total disregard of the right of peoples to self-determination;

2. The desire to impose a single model of democracy, known as bourgeois liberal democracy, which considers itself a universal model that must be followed;

3. The intention to restrict the foundations of democracy to civil and political rights, particularly the so-called bourgeois fundamental freedoms, to the detriment of the remaining categories of human rights;

4. The desire of a number of industrialized Powers to manipulate a so-called "right to democracy" to justify aggression and military intervention against developing countries;

5. The growing tendency of donors to impose conditions on the provision of development assistance to countries of the South, to the detriment of their peoples' right to determine their own needs and priorities;

6. Attempts to manipulate the institutions of the United Nations system to serve the interest of some industrialized Powers in interfering in the affairs of countries of the South while seeking to ensure their own immunity from any scrutiny.

The recent failed attempt to force the General Assembly to adopt a "Code of Democratic Conduct" for States is only one manifestation, though one of the most dangerous, of the interrelationship among some of the above-mentioned trends.

While so-called bourgeois liberal democracy seems to have worked, though with severe limitations, in the countries of Western Europe, it has proved to be unworkable in other contexts. The hypothesis of its universal superiority cannot be successfully argued.

The movement of the so-called new and restored democracies may represent a vehicle for exchanges with and support for many countries in their efforts to consolidate their democratic systems. However, it is itself under threat and runs the same risks as the other forms of international cooperation in the area of democracy.

The unity of the developing countries and efforts to ensure the strictest observance of the right of peoples to self-determination and the principles enshrined in the Charter of the United Nations will be key determinants of its future success. Cuba is following these developments with interest.

The Republic of Cuba bases its democratic system on the principles of freedom, popular participation, social justice, individual and collective well-being and human solidarity. Sovereignty rests with the people, from whom all the State's power is derived.

Cuba will never be able to join a consensus on the imposition of a model of democracy that contravenes the democratic order which its people have chosen by approving, by an overwhelming majority, in a universal referendum, the Constitution establishing that order.

Republic of San Marino

[Original: English]
[12 July 2000]

The Government of the Republic of San Marino has the honour to express the solidarity of the Republic of San Marino to all countries that have undertaken the process towards democratization.

Romania

[Original: French]
[12 July 2000]

1. Romania is a Central European State with a multiparty, parliamentary political system. The basic law of Romania, the 1991 Constitution, contains the principle of separation of State powers: the legislative power, exercised by a two-chamber Parliament (the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies), the executive power, which is the prerogative of the President and the Government of Romania, and the judicial power.

The local and central State bodies are representative, having resulted from free elections (1990, 1992 and 1996). The outcome of the elections reflects the specific practice of States which have the advanced democratic feature of alternation in government (in 1990 and 1992 the parties of the left triumphed, whereas in 1996 a coalition formed of centre and right-wing parties won the elections). The multiparty system and political pluralism function according to the same criteria and procedures as in any democratic country: every party that crosses a given threshold can be represented in the Parliament.

2. All these fundamental values, assimilated, observed and deployed, are reflected in the most important organic law of the Romanian State, the

Constitution, which was adopted in November 1991 and which entered into force in December 1991, after being approved by referendum. Article 1 stresses the fact that "Romania is a democratic and social State governed by the rule of law, in which human dignity, citizens' rights and freedoms, the unimpeded development of human personality, justice and political pluralism represent supreme values and shall be guaranteed". Developing this general assertion, and in keeping with article 8, namely that "pluralism in Romanian society is a condition and safeguard of constitutional democracy", article 20 provides that "constitutional provisions concerning citizens' rights and freedoms shall be interpreted and enforced in conformity with the Universal Declaration of Human Rights and with the covenants and other treaties to which Romania is a party".

Where human rights and fundamental freedoms are concerned, the following rights are provided for in the Constitution:

- The equal rights of all citizens before the law;
- The right to express ethnic, cultural, linguistic and religious identity for persons belonging to national minorities;
- The right to life and to physical and mental integrity;
- Individual freedom and security of person;
- The right to defence;
- The right of free movement within the country and abroad;
- The right to an intimate, family and private life;
- Inviolability of domicile;
- Secrecy of correspondence;
- Freedom of conscience;
- Freedom to express thoughts, opinions or beliefs by any means of communication;
- The right to information;
- The right to education;
- The right to health protection;
- The right of association;
- The right to meet and hold meetings;
- The right to vote and to be elected;
- The right to work and to social protection of labour;
- The prohibition of forced labour;
- The right to strike;
- The protection of those with disabilities;
- The right of petition;
- The right of a person injured by a public authority to request annulment of the act and reparation of the injury sustained.

3. The link between democracy and human rights is evident. A democratic society is the best guarantee that all human rights are respected. In Romania, we are building a very solid bridge between domestic legislation and the instruments of international law concerning human rights. Pursuant to article 20 of our Constitution, "where any inconsistencies exist between the covenants and treaties on fundamental human rights to which Romania is a party and internal laws, the international rules shall take precedence".

We therefore have a sound and rational framework for dealing with human rights questions in a process that is both sensitive and dynamic. We have made substantial efforts to overcome inherent tensions resulting from militant nationalism or complex ethnic relations, which were passed over in silence during the communist dictatorship. We have harnessed the resources of society as a whole, from the determination of the political leaders to the goodwill of civil society to hold a constructive dialogue. Forecasts of imminent nationalist danger in Romania and in its relations with its neighbours have proved false. We now offer a European example of good neighbourliness and broad cooperation. Much remains to be done. Yet, it is indisputable that we, together with our neighbours, have succeeded in eliminating the ghosts of the past.

4. The experience of democratic construction in Romania demonstrates that economic success is a prerequisite for sustaining democracy and its institutions. Freedom in poverty is not at all desirable. An economic transition is even more complicated than a political transition. It requires fundamental changes in the system of redistribution, management and competitiveness. We do not have enough time to verify the economic theories of Keynes and Friedman regarding the role of the State in the economy. There is

no single model to follow. The developed world is confronted with so-called crises of the welfare State or is studying the corporatism-versus-democracy dilemma. We make patient efforts to restructure the economy and to try out or consolidate market mechanisms, while at the same time resisting a decline in productive capacity. Democracy also means participation. But participation in the management of an economy is necessarily almost evasive in a society in transition. Such participation is affected by the growth of unemployment. The trade unions have greatly increased their influence but are more comfortable dealing with the Government than with market forces. The principal actors are still defenceless when it comes to understanding and overcoming the powerful forces of globalization. We have taken the excessive power of the dictators and returned it to the people. We must, however, be cautious when it comes to excessive economic and financial power accorded to actors who exert a decisive influence on the lives of people, without necessarily representing them.

5. Good governance is of the utmost importance. A young democracy must have a well-established, professional civil service which is able to recruit persons of intelligence and to put effectively into practice at all levels the development of a vertical and horizontal culture of cooperation between the various branches of government.

6. We should also highlight the role of political parties as central institutions of a democratic and pluralist society. Whatever their faults, they are of critical importance in the functioning of democracy in Romania. They represent essential organizational structures through which political opinions and positions are transmitted up to the decision-making level. They are the laboratories in which those who will assume power as political leaders are prepared. We have to start with the initial stage of forming parties as a springboard to power and to proceed to develop the basic functions: offering a permanent point of contact between citizens and government, elaborating policy and political programmes, and selecting competent and honest politicians. The morality of political parties must be a dominant part of public life. The battle against corruption in political life and the process of governance must be genuine and constant, and it must be widely believed that all-powerful corruption undermines the values of democracy.

7. The media in Romania are a truly powerful and mature institution. They play an important role by providing information of public interest, monitoring the exercise of power by the Government and causing politicians to rise or fall. During elections in Romania, particularly those held in 1992 and 1996 and the local elections in 2000, the media had a decisive impact on the electorate. The objectivity of the media can be of considerable assistance in strengthening democracy. However, experience demonstrates that objectivity depends on the type of organization: the point is not the public or private character of ownership of the media but rather the access of parties or interest groups to the media. Even in this case, however, if there are various opinion makers and if their financial resources are comparable, there is a good chance that the media will make a balanced contribution.

8. Romania has gained much from its international interaction. From the efforts made with a view to our integration into the North Atlantic Treaty Organization we have learned the importance of consolidating our stability and projecting it in the region. We have passed through the complex stage whose goal was to establish the right conditions for the democratic control of the political factor over the military factor. We are still learning a great deal from the negotiations dealing with integration into the European Union, which amount to a long series of in-depth studies on the situation of each of the candidate countries. The effort at adaptation covers a broad range of subjects, from human rights to environmental protection, from education to jobs, and from trade to social affairs. We are aware that the projected "democratic" society is not a flawless structure in which the parts fit together in perfect harmony. The undertaking urgently requires of every responsible citizen an enterprising spirit and a constant involvement at all levels of society.

9. Democracy is an option consistently reflected in the norms and principles governing Romania's foreign policy. The Romanian State maintains and develops peaceful and good-neighbourly relations with all countries, on the basis of the generally recognized norms of international law, and is careful to fulfil scrupulously and in good faith the obligations deriving from the international treaties to which it is a party (in accordance with articles 10 and 11 of the Constitution).

Romania contributes actively to the process of maintaining international peace and security and seeks

to promote democratic values and practices at both the bilateral and multilateral levels.

In the area of international relations, this position has been highlighted on three important occasions during the past four years:

(a) The Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, held in Bucharest from 2 to 4 September 1997;

(b) The meeting of the follow-up mechanism to the Conference, held in Bucharest on 17 and 18 May 1999, at which the Romanian delegation introduced the document entitled "code of democratic conduct";

(c) The submission by Romania of the resolution entitled "Promoting and consolidating democracy", adopted by the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva.

10. The Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies on Democracy and Development, organized and hosted by the Romanian Government with the assistance of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), which was attended by representatives of 80 States and high officials of the United Nations system, culminated in the adoption of the final document, entitled "Progress review and recommendations" (A/52/334, annex, appendix).

This document, which is forward-looking and action-oriented, sets forth the guidelines essential for governance, addressed to civil society, the private sector and international organizations, and recommends that a process should be established to follow their application.

11. In its capacity as current President of the International Conference of New or Restored Democracies, Romania established in New York the follow-up mechanism, made up of representatives of States Members of the United Nations and of agencies and institutions of the United Nations system. This mechanism has initiated, debated and developed a set of measures for the implementation of the Bucharest Conference recommendations.

The proposals of the follow-up mechanism were discussed in depth, approved and strengthened at the Ministerial Meeting of New or Restored Democracies (New York, 22 September 1998).

12. With the support of UNDP, the Romanian Ministry of Foreign Affairs organized in Bucharest on 17 and 18 May 1999 an enlarged meeting of the follow-up mechanism, in which non-governmental organizations and Romanian research institutes participated. At that meeting a code of democratic conduct was studied, discussed and approved (A/54/178, annex).

In that document, States Members of the United Nations are called upon to consolidate democracy by the following means:

(a) Promotion of political pluralism;

(b) Protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms;

(c) Maximizing the participation of citizens in decision-making;

(d) Development of competent and responsible public institutions.

The document emphasizes that a democratic system of government is essential for the fulfilment of the political, economic and social aspirations of all the peoples around the world, and it emphasizes the need for sustained development of international cooperation as a principal means of consolidating democratic institutions and fostering the rule of law.

13. Romania's most recent initiative in the area of international relations, aimed at building genuine democracy, was the preparation and submission for discussion in the United Nations Commission on Human Rights in Geneva of resolution 2000/47, entitled "Promoting and consolidating democracy".

The resolution refers to the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations, reaffirms that the basic aims of the United Nations include the promotion of democracy, the promotion and encouragement of respect for human rights and fundamental freedoms and the strengthening of the rule of law within the framework of the United Nations and other international organizations, and calls upon States to promote and consolidate democracy.

The Secretary-General of the United Nations and the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights are expected to devote due attention to the document in their reports and to submit it for discussion and analysis by Member States, the competent United Nations bodies and international and

non-governmental organizations, so that the set of principles, values and practices adopted will constitute a point of reference in the evaluation of democratic processes.

14. Romania is fully aware that the United Nations, the United Nations system and the specialized agencies constitute an essential and exceptional legal and political framework for the complex process of promoting and consolidating democracy throughout the world. The democratic developments which have taken place in international relations are in no way inconsistent with the purposes and principles of the United Nations.

As is clear from the report of the Secretary-General of the United Nations to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly entitled "Support by the United Nations system of the efforts of Governments to promote or consolidate new or restored democracies" (A/54/492), democracy has always been a focal point of the Organization's activities and concerns. Taking into account the specific characteristics of democracy in each State and wishing to be informed of the experience gained and the lessons learned with regard to the implementation of democratic values, the Secretary-General requested comments and observations on the situation of democracy in each State Member of the United Nations. This step further strengthens the position of the United Nations, under whose auspices many activities and initiatives aimed at promoting and consolidating democracy throughout the world are being undertaken.

With a view to realizing its potential for supporting the democratic process, the United Nations could take the following measures:

- Encourage the dialogue among Member States at the official or informal levels on themes relating to the promotion and development of democracy at the "democracy forum" organized within the framework of the follow-up mechanism to the Third International Conference of New or Restored Democracies;
- Disseminate widely the recommendations made in resolution 2000/47 entitled "Promoting and consolidating democracy" and encourage their implementation by Member States;
- Use existing possibilities within the United Nations system for the preparation of analytical and comparative studies of existing democratic institutions and mechanisms throughout the world;
- Intensify the dialogue between the Organization and Member States concerning the specific characteristics of the democratic process in various countries, and the experience of the latter, perhaps by the use of questionnaires;
- Promote methods of benefiting from the experience of traditional consolidated democracies, including the weaknesses and problems they have encountered;
- Promote the inclusion in all plans for future United Nations activities measures to support the trend towards the formation and consolidation of participatory democracy;
- Implement the recommendations contained in the report of the Secretary-General to the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly (A/54/492).

Japan

[Original: English]
[9 August 2000]

1. Basic policy

In a strong democracy, the participation of people in governance and development is promoted and human rights are protected. Therefore, strengthening the foundations of democracy is an extremely important factor in promoting a country's medium- and long-term stability and development. Japan strongly hopes to see such universal values as democracy and human rights realized in every corner of the world and the systems enabling the realization of such values developed.

Through its official development assistance (ODA), the Japanese Government has been actively supporting democratization efforts. Japan's ODA Charter clearly states the basic position of the Government of Japan, as one of the principles in the ODA Charter stipulates that "full attention should be paid to efforts for promoting democratization and the introduction of a market-oriented economy and the situation regarding the securing of basic human rights

and freedoms in the recipient country". Furthermore, support for democratization is among the priority issues and sectors in Japan's Medium-Term Policy on ODA as announced in August 1999.

In 1996, Japan described the efforts it had made in support of democratization and clearly explained its basic policy as "Partnership for Democratic Development (PDD)". In doing so, it also expressed its intention to strengthen support for democratization efforts in various parts of the world.

Under the Partnership for Democratic Development, projects supporting democratization should be implemented according to the following three principles as well as protection and promotion of human rights:

(a) They should be based on a partnership between Japan and the recipient country;

(b) They should be provided to the self-help efforts of the recipient country;

(c) They should be implemented after consultations and agreements with the recipient country.

This idea of "partnership" is a "lesson learned" from Japan's own experience as a donor country supporting democratization. In respect of the pursuing of the establishment of democracy over a long period in young democratic countries, it is important that those countries take initiatives on their own; otherwise, democracy will not take root. From this point of view, Japan attaches great importance to the idea of partnership. Recognizing that the development of democracy and the promotion and protection of human rights require not only the political will of the Government but also appropriate systems, institutions and human resources, Japan believes it important to provide support on a cooperative basis to those countries that are making efforts towards democratization.

2. Japan's support

With this basic policy in mind, Japan provides support for the promotion of democratization and human rights in the following areas.

(a) Support for system-building

In an effort to support the establishment of functional legal, administrative and police systems, which are the foundations of a democracy, Japan organizes lectures and introduces Japanese systems to recipient countries through the dispatch of experts, the acceptance of trainees and invitations to government officials and related personnel. Japan also extends financial assistance to support the building of these systems.

(b) Electoral support

In order to support the holding of democratic elections, which enable the people to participate in politics, Japan dispatches personnel and provides financial assistance, electoral training and the supply of equipment and materials.

(c) Intellectual support

In order to promote awareness of human rights and the consolidation of democracy, Japan provides grants for research relating to human rights and democratization and for cultural and educational facilities. It also dispatches and invites opinion leaders, intellectuals and others.

(d) Strengthening of civil society

In order to contribute to the strengthening of civil society, which is the basis of democratization, and to human resources development, the Japanese Government supports the activities of non-governmental organizations and Governments of recipient countries, cooperates with Japanese non-governmental organizations and provides support and training for promoting the media.

(e) Improving the status of women

In promoting democratization in developing countries, Japan emphasizes the role and human rights of women and provides assistance for the improvement of their status and the expansion of their political participation.

3. Examples of projects in 1998

(a) Support for system-building

Support for democratization:

- Mongolia: accepted: six persons; dispatched: two persons;
- Nepal: accepted: one person;
- Seminar on Democracy and Good Governance (for English-speaking countries in Africa, El Salvador and Tajikistan): accepted: 29 persons;
- Contribution to the Voluntary Fund for Advisory Services and Technical Assistance, Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (US$ 607,000);

Support for legal and judicial systems:

- Legal and judicial cooperation in Cambodia: accepted: 15 persons; dispatched: 1 person;
- Legal and judicial cooperation in Viet Nam: accepted: 20 persons, dispatched: 16 persons;
- Legal and judicial cooperation in Lao People's Democratic Republic: accepted: 17 persons;
- International training course on civil and commercial law: accepted 12 persons;
- International training programmes at the Asia and Far East Institute for the Prevention of Crime and the Treatment of Offenders (UNAFEI) (four courses): accepted: 61 persons;
- International training course on corruption control in criminal justice: accepted: nine persons;

Support for Administrative Systems:

- Training programme on national government administration (two courses): accepted: 23 persons;
- Training programme on local government administration (four courses): accepted: 45 persons;
- Seminar for top managers in developing countries on local government administration (held twice): accepted: 18 persons in total;
- Research support project on immigration administration: accepted: 10 persons;
- Training courses for Palestinians on governance and institution-building: accepted: 143 persons;
- Assistance for administrative expense of the Palestinian Authority (contribution to United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the World Bank: US$ 3.88 million);

Support for police systems:

- Seminar for women police orientation in Pakistan: accepted: five persons;
- Seminar for senior police administrators in Latin American countries: accepted: 12 persons;
- Training course for police administration in Cambodia: accepted: 10 persons;
- Seminar on police administration for South Africa: accepted: five persons;
- Traffic police administration seminar: accepted: 12 persons;
- Seminar for senior police managers: accepted: six persons.

(b) Support for democratic elections

Support for elections:

- Cambodia: National Parliamentary election (US$ 6.725 million, including a $3.25 million contribution to the UNDP Trust Fund; 32 persons dispatched);
- Bosnia and Herzegovina: general and regional elections (US$ 1 million to the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE); 30 persons dispatched);
- Nigeria: National Assembly and presidential elections (US$ 410,000 to the Electoral Assistance Secretariat in Nigeria; six persons dispatched);
- Central Africa: National Parliamentary elections (US$ 830,000, including a $330,000 contribution to UNDP; two persons dispatched);
- Guinea: Presidential election (US$ 720,000);
- Lesotho: general election (US$ 200,000 contribution to UNDP; four persons dispatched);

- Ecuador: Presidential and National Parliamentary elections (US$ 63,000 contribution to the Organization of American States (OAS)).

(c) Intellectual support

Intellectual support:

- Projects conducted by the Japan Foundation Asia Centre (support for research on democratization, convening of conferences and so forth): 17 projects;
- Provision of subsidies to the Japan Foundation for convening Japan-Europe seminars and symposia (targeting former Soviet Union and Eastern Europe): 32 projects;
- Personnel exchanges to support democratization and Market Opening Assistance Project: accepted: four persons;
- Cooperation with the Council of Europe:
  - International Seminar on the Legal Status of Non-Governmental Organizations and Their Role in a Pluralistic Democracy (151,000 French francs, dispatch of a lecturer);
  - Venice Commission (European Commission for Democracy through Law) UNIDEM Seminar (dispatch of lecturers);
  - International Seminar on Action against Traffic in Human Beings for the Purpose of Sexual Exploitation (dispatch of lecturers);
- Convening of International Symposium on Children and Armed Conflict (approximately 40 panellists accepted).

(d) Strengthening of civil society

As follows:

- Support for local non-governmental organization projects and local governments (grant assistance for grass-roots projects) for projects related to education on democratization and voter enlightenment (52.7 million yen (¥) for eight projects);
- Support for Japanese non-governmental organizations (non-governmental organization projects subsidy) for human resources development projects (26 projects worth ¥80 million);
- Media development: journalist invitation programme: 120 persons accepted; fellowship programme: 50 young journalists accepted; television crews, 25 teams accepted.

(e) Improving the status of women

As follows:

- Meeting of Senior Officials of National Machineries for the Advancement of Women in East and South-East Asian countries: accepted: 11 persons;
- Japan-Egypt-Jordan women's exchange programme: accepted: six persons;
- United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) girls' education projects ($0.5 million for Senegal, $0.5 million for Viet Nam);
- Various seminars:
  - Seminar on improvement of the status of women: accepted: 12 persons;
  - Seminar on regional educative administration for Guatemala;
- Support for local non-governmental organization projects and local governmental projects (grant assistance for grass-roots projects) for women in development (about ¥1.286 million for 240 projects);
- Support for Japanese non-governmental organizations (non-governmental organization project subsidy) for women's self-reliance assistance projects (16 projects worth ¥62.51 million).

Germany

[Original: English]
[3 October 2000]

The process of transformation in Germany: 10 years of national unity

Ten years ago, on 3 October 1990, Germany achieved national unity. Unification at the same time marked a fresh start in the life of the Germans. For the people in the former German Democratic Republic

(GDR), it brought the hope of long-denied political freedoms, freedom to travel, unhindered contact with friends and relatives in the West and a better standard of living. The civil courage demonstrated by the people of East Germany in the peaceful revolution was the decisive trigger for the subsequent comprehensive changes. Nevertheless, people in eastern and western Germany are conscious that unity was possible only with the solidarity and support of friendly States and as part of the greater European peace and integration process. The ensuing period of legal, economic and cultural adaptation between two different societies had, however, negative as well as positive aspects; euphoria frequently had to give way to disillusionment. In particular, the economic challenges, whose dimensions and repercussions were initially greatly underestimated by most observers, hampered the process of growing together. The biggest shock for many was undoubtedly the loss of their job and thus of one of the key elements of their social integration.

Peaceful revolution: the basis of unification

Unification would have been inconceivable without the impetus given by courageous citizens in the GDR and their resolute commitment to bringing about a radical change in the political situation. On 4 September 1989, following prayers for peace in the Nikolaikirche, some 1,200 people gathered in Leipzig for the first "Monday demonstration". Just a few weeks later, on Monday, 9 October, over 70,000 people demonstrated in Leipzig for political freedom. Demonstrations were held in many other East German towns as well. On 4 November 1989 over half a million people gathered in East Berlin. What had started out as a local protest had become a powerful movement for freedom and democracy across the entire country. The people's protests shook the East German regime to its core and eventually led to its collapse. The citizens' continuing resistance forced the country to open up within and, with the fall of the Wall on the evening of 9 November, to open up to the outside world. The crucial steps towards democratic emancipation came even before the GDR's demise. The Round Table brought together all political groupings. The first democratic elections to the East German Parliament (*Volkskammer*) were held on 18 March 1990. Then came Economic Monetary and Social Union on 1 July, making the deutsche mark the official currency in the GDR. In the night of 22/23 August, the *Volkskammer* decided to accede to the Federal Republic of Germany on 3 October 1990.

Rapid institutional reorganization and integration

The *Volkskammer*'s decision of 22 July abolished the centrally steered State structure of the GDR and re-established the five eastern German federated States (*Land*; plural: *Lander*) that had been dissolved in 1952. All the new *Lander* went through a comprehensive new start in government and administration. This involved the development of *Land* administrations, an independent judiciary, labour and social administrations, and the federal administrations and other institutions required for the functioning of a democratic constitutional State. The municipalities were granted the right to administer their affairs and were broadly restructured in terms of size, administration and form of political representation. The reordered police force was quickly established.

Together with Economic and Monetary Union on 1 July 1990, Social Union entered into force, laying the foundation for the introduction of the social market economy. With the subsequent complete integration of all East Germans into the Federal Republic's social security systems, virtually everything in East Germany changed overnight: the world of work, schools and education, existing social ties, dealings with government and non-government institutions, and much else besides.

The economy and work: success and failure

Unification revealed the full extent of the shortcomings in the East German economy. Large parts of the capital stock were obsolete. Productivity was scarcely 30 per cent of the West German level. The GDR's product range was hardly competitive, and its traditional markets in Eastern Europe were quickly lost. Within a short time, large sections of the East German economy were insolvent. The politicians tried to cushion this dramatic economic collapse by substantially increasing support for the economy and businesses, and endeavoured to give a social response to the labour-market repercussions by extending employment promotion measures.

In addition to the problems deriving from the very nature of the changes, a number of political decisions hampered the economic development of the

new *Lander*, for instance, the initial unilateral privatization policy of the *Treuhandanstalt* (the job of the *Treuhandanstalt*, a government agency, was to adapt viable East German companies to the market economy and to wind up companies with no real prospect of survival) and the concept of promotion in the early 1990s, which concentrated too much on investment in the construction sector, leading to excess capacities in the medium term. Too late were these mistakes recognized and the focus of promotion switched to industry and industrial services.

Historical analysis of repression

Democracy, legal security, freedom to travel — the demands of the demonstrators in 1989 — are today guaranteed in the united Germany. And the political past is being digested, as internal unification is a matter not only of harmonizing economic and social standards, but also of historical and political identity. Academics, the judiciary and the public are trying to deal with the injustices of the East German regime and the suffering of the victims. Two Study Commissions of the German Bundestag have given impetus in this regard and established that the consolidation of an anti-totalitarian consensus supported by society is one of the indispensable elements of any stable democracy. The Federal Commissioner for the files of the State Security Service of the former German Democratic Republic is making a crucial contribution towards a historical analysis of the system of repression in the GDR. With the Foundation for the Examination of the SED Dictatorship, the Federation is supporting above all diverse social initiatives in this field. (The *Sozialistische Einheitspartei* (SED), or United Socialist Party, was former East Germany's ruling party.)

Development of the economy

With the entry into force of social law reforms on 1 August 1999, the foundations were laid for a sound labour-market policy. However, labour-market policy must not be regarded as the only motor for increased employment. If the fight against unemployment is to be lastingly successful, it is extremely important that economic development in the new *Lander* be consolidated. Particular importance attaches in this context to the extension of the industrial base, the promotion of small and medium-sized enterprises and the improvement of the innovative capacity and competitiveness of the eastern German economy. The Federal Government is supporting this process within the framework of its overall economic concept for the new *Lander*. This consists, on the one hand, of the creation of a growth-oriented economic environment, especially as envisaged in the Federal Government's Future 2000 Programme and the taxation reform in 2000. Healthy public finances create room for manoeuvre in fiscal policy, allowing the gradual reduction of the tax burden and reliable financial support for the reconstruction of the eastern part of the country. On the other hand, the aim must be to open up new fields for the eastern German economy by deliberately promoting innovation, regional development, infrastructure, small and medium-sized enterprises and business start-ups.

Promoting mutual understanding

Just as integration and a feeling of belonging together must be encouraged in the united Germany, so Government and society are called upon to create a climate of cosmopolitanism and tolerance. This applies above all to dealings with our foreign fellow citizens. Anyone familiar with the facts knows that right-wing extremism and xenophobic attacks are not an exclusively eastern German problem, but one disseminated throughout our country. All democratic groups must stand together in the face of nascent xenophobia. In this context, it is a matter not only of demonstrating clear contempt for right-wing extremist violence by applying the full force of the law against the perpetrators, but also of providing help for those whose hopelessness threatens to push them over the edge into extremism. Above all, we need civil courage to refuse to let radical movements despising mankind gain ground. With the "Alliance for Democracy and Tolerance — against Extremism and Violence", which was established this year, the Federal Government and other like-minded alliances and civil initiatives hope to encourage this stance.